A RED SQUIRREL

By Ernest Harold Baynes.

NOT far from where I live, a red squirrel had his winter nest in a hollow apple tree, near the edge of a wood. It was a warm nest, made of soft, brown bark, which the industrious little fellow had stripped from the trunks of half-a-dozen cedar trees in the fall. He used this nest for two purposes—to sleep in at night, and to hide in when he was closely pressed by an enemy. He was seldom there in the daytime, for he was as hardy as a polar bear, and was abroad in all kinds of weather. The snow was never too deep for him, nor the air too biting cold. Often, while the gray squirrels were so sound asleep in their tree-tops that you would almost have had to pinch them to make them wake up, I followed the trail of my little red equirrel from tree to tree, and along the walls and fence rails, until I have found him perched on the top of a farm gate-post, eating a hickory nut with great composure, while the wind fairly whistled through the long hairs of his bushy tail, which tried in vain to maintain a reasonably upright position. Sometimes, when there was no snow on the ground, the first intimation I would have of his presence would be an irritable, chattering cry such as red squirrels are in the habit of uttering when they are displeased over anything. It might be an owl, dozing in some dark pine tree, which was the cause of his irritability, or it might be a hawk, sailing in broad circles overhead; but, as often as not, the simple fact of my presence in that section of the woods was enough to disturb his peace of mind to such an extent that he would burst into a torrent of abusive chattering, to which he would keep time by stamping his feet and twitching his tail.

True to his family characteristics, he was a provident little fellow, and during the autumn he always gathered and stored away enough nuts and seeds to last him through the longest winter he was ever likely to see. In the year of which I write, he had made no exception, and he had several piles of nuts hidden in stumps and under logs in the vicinity of his home. But, unfortunately for him, a band of thoughtless boys, roaming the woods, accidentally came upon one of his hoards, and, in noisy glee, began to fill their pockets with their plunder. The presence of these nuts suggested there might be more in the vicinity, and before dark the urchins had so thoroughly scoured that corner of the woods that they had found and carried off every nut which the squirrel had been at such pains to gather. Poor fellow, he had a very hard time of it for the next few days, trying in vain to borrow or steal from some of his brethren. But they were all too selfish to loan or too wideawake to be robbed, and drove the hungry one away with much abusive chatter, and he, in desperation, stole repeatedly from the store of a wood-mouse. But the latter was too wise to allow that sort of thing to continue, and removed her provisions to a hole under a rock, where the squirrel could no longer get at them. After that he got very hungry, indeed.

Outside of my study window there is placed every winter a large wooden tray filled with canary seeds, bread crumbs, shredded suet and cracked nuts, and many hungry birds come there to get their meals. One morning, as I looked through the window, I saw not a single bird, but a thin red squirrel, sitting right in the middle of the tray and eating as jockeys eat at the end of a racing season. When I approached, he seemed alarmed, but, as I did not attempt to drive him away, he soon lost all appearance of fear, and continued to stuff himself with the best the tray afforded. I decided to let him stay as long as he would, but when I found him there again the next morning I was obliged to put up another tray for the birds, in a place where the squirrel couldn't reach it. The four-footed pensioner grew bolder as the increasing rotundity of his body pressed the wrinkles out of his skin, and he kept his seat even if I opened the window. At last he became almost arrogant, and scolded if I appeared at the window while he was feeding. But the laws of hospitality, though made of elastic, may be stretched, but not compressed, and, as he chose to stay all winter, he stayed.

In the spring, the migrant birds came back, and among them a pair of robins, which nested in an apple tree in my garden. All went well until the young birds were hatched, when one day I heard the angry voices of the parent birds, and I looked out to see what the trouble was. The mother robin was seated on a low branch, and, with lowered wings and tail, was screaming loudly at some object below her, apparently on the trunk of the tree. Presently she darted down, with her crest raised and her bill open and ready for business, and then I caught sight of the rascally red squirrel, who scurried round the trunk to avoid her. Round and round she chased him, until he seemed to lose his presence of mind and leaped to the ground. He started across the grass at full speed, but she was after him like a fury, and he squeaked in abject terror as he fled across the road and into the woods, where the bird gave up the chase and returned, ruffled but triumphant.

Had he profited by this experience, the red squirrel might have been living today, but one morning he wandered into the garden of a neighbor who was studying a pair of nesting redstarts. The squirrel found the nest, too, and a moment afterwards he was seated near it, with one of the eggs in his paws. But he never finished that egg, for my neighbor has a gun, and he values redstarts higher than red squirrels.

The Art of Being Agreeable

The Fine Art of Conversation.

By Adelaide Gordon

Mrs. Gordon will answer inquiries addressed to her by readers. Letters should enclose return postage and should always be addressed thus:
ADELAIDE GORDON,
156 Fifth avenue, New York.

Educate yourself in the habit of ready, graceful speech. Socially, you can go far and work wonders through this powerful and delightful medium.

It is as serious a mistake to shirk your conversational responsibilities as it is to neglect your toilet, or the benefits of education. The shirkers are not only the selfish, silent ones, who do not, will not, and say they cannot talk. A goodly number of them possess active enough tongues and brains, and yet feel, and know, that they fail to express themselves happily, interestingly, ingratiatingly, by word of the mouth.

Their trouble is that they are usually the victim of a number of bad habits. For instance, their most common and conspicuous fault is that they have given no thought to the acquirement of the good speaking voice.

Go Slow and Speak Low.

I wish more men and women would follow that simple precept. When they do a big stride is taken toward the attainment of charm in conversation. The American voice—especially that of the feminine American—has, I grieve to say, an ugly and almost international reputation. It is flat, thin and unmusical. We may not, as a nation, learn to make our tones round, full and sweet, but any one who earnestly tries can easily overcome the disagreeable habit of speaking too loudly and too rapidly.

Most voices could be advantageously lowered a whole octave, and the enunciation greatly sweetened and improved by deliberation.

In an argument or conversation that houses your keen interest, remember not to lift your voice high above that of your companion. This is not only a cheap and very unfair means of enforcing your views, but it is downright bad manners. It fails to give weight to your opinions, and it very often wounds and annoys.

A matter of vital importance is to realize not only that the low, sweet voice is an excellent thing in man as well as woman, but that it is mighty in persuasion.

Its attainment is a question of nothing more than an expenditure of time, patience and practice.

Wesley, so his biographers say, could reduce a congregation of the roughest country people to tears of softened delight by his mere pronunciation of the word Mesopotamia.

This goes to prove what many socially disappointed men and women fail to find out for themselves, namely, that there is as much influence wielded by the manner as the matter of one's conversation.

I don't dispute the value of brains, but mere wit and learning are not the only qualities to be exhibited in your speech. You can create an impression, an enduring and delightful one, by other means, neither difficult to study nor employ.

The Best Impression.

This, in nine cases out of ten, is created by the reposeful talker. I mean by the individual who has no affectations or nervous habits.

The little involuntary laugh, the constantly recurring catch phrase, the exaggerated facial expression, and the frequent use of superfluous adjectives must be one and all sternly condemned, and, if possible, stoutly repressed.

If you have fallen into the way of winding up your every sentence with a giggle, you may not know it, but you have sadly injured your chance of popularity. Laugh when the opportunity for mirth arises, and laugh heartily, but don't laugh inanely, habitually; there is no excuse for this habit.

Sit still when you speak or hearken to others. A rocking chair in motion is a nuisance; so also are wiggling feet, and the fingers that twiddle with a neck chain. Restrict yourself severely in the use of such silly interpolations and ejaculations as "Don't you know?" "Do you see?" "I say," etc.

Just as inelegant and annoying is the provincial reiteration of "I-guess," "I reckon," "You don't say?" and the like.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood as advocating stolidity when I offer very strenuous objections to the excitable talker, who positively gesticulates with his features as well as his hands, and uses the most hyperbolic language in mentioning the simplest incident or familiar object.

Talk with animation, and plenty of it, but do not fall into the common and distressing fault of describing a dainty dish as "perfectly grand," the old parlor carpet as "just ghastly," and your luck at bridge whist as "something fierce."

Be temperate, even to the point of abstemiousness, in your use of the current slang, and give a deal of painstaking attention to the pronunciation of your mother tongue. These may seem very unimportant details, but truly they are not.

Only a week ago I heard a highly bred woman and hostess sit in very severe judgment upon a young man who had paid her daughter some attentions.

"He looked so like a gentleman," said the lady, regretfully, but with firm finality. "He bore a good name, too, one well known in my part of the state, but his speech hopelessly belied his appearance; I simply could not ask him to my house and introduce him to my friends."

This same young man, who would have blushed to put his knife into his mouth or tuck his napkin under his chin, was not aware that it is socially as essential to use one's native language correctly as it is to wear clean linen and eat peas with a fork.

He was able, honest, kind, but his speech placed him at the greatest disadvantage in polite society. He was neither coarse nor foolish, but a liberal use of slang and a reckless indifference to the rules of grammar put him outside the pale.

Occasionally slang is amusing and forceful, but as a rule this cheap, vulgar language of the street is to be avoided, and, by men and women who have passed their first youth, it should not be employed at all.

Good, clear, simple, grammatical English serves without ever sounding high-flown or pedantic.

A Fascinating Faculty.

If you wish to be universally commended as a companion in conversation, learn to look interested, smile readily, and give always your real and undivided attention to the remarks addressed to your ear.

Oh, the selfish and short-sighted men and women I know who give heed only when the conversation is interesting to them. They answer at random, but their glances stray about and their wits wander where they choose. They are forever wondering why their social progress is slow; why their popularity wanes, and nobody pays them the compliment of solicitous and pleasing attention.

Not only is this sadly common indulgence and mistake a piece of the grossest rudeness, but it as well a form of the grossest selfishness.

Assume an interest if you have it not, and keep your eyes and your wits almost uninterruptedly on the companion who engages your time and your ear. "There are glances that have more wit than the most subtle speech." There is an indescribable and irresistible flattery in this that never fails to charm.

The cleverest and most popular woman of my acquaintance has perfected this art of making others talk their best. She knows how to be unselfish at the right time and pay everybody the compliment of a hearing. So long as you talk she is oblivious to the outside world.

Verily, she has her reward. She is more sought after than any five other women of my acquaintance. She is not wealthy, witty, nor a pretty woman, but she has something better than wealth, or brains, or beauty; she is unselfishly tactful.

The Triumph of Tact.

It always triumphs.

You can learn to use tact in conversation just as readily as you can acquire the low, agreeable voice and proper English.

Tact includes the gentle art of never treading verbally on other people's toes.

For example, it was a pitifully tactless girl who blurted out at a dinner table her opinion of stamp collectors as "harmless idiots."

Now, the very nice man who sat on her right was a philalethian of no mean attainments. He was a dignified, brilliant lawyer as well, and so in love with his hobby that he never forgave the pretty damsel her thoughtless remark, which was foolish, careless and unkind, as such sweeping critical statements ever are. It has been well said: "Silence is the art of fools, and one of the virtues of the timid."

Better sit silent than fall into such an error as the above. The error of the clever and the tactless.

Cherish opinions and convictions, but be careful how you express them.

Express your approval of those you both like and admire, but preserve an amiable reserve when that of which you disapprove, or those you dislike, chances to be under discussion. Remember that your next neighbor at table, or in a group on the tennis court, may be the sister of the individual you have vigorously condemned, or the author of the book you found so stupid.

By following this principle of discreet silence, you are merely observing the golden rule, and you will, therefore, never be a terror to your hostess, and a too common stumbling block in the way of social progress will be removed from your path.

The tactful talker again is one who has not an emphatic habit of speech.

The tactful talker does not use many foreign or unusual words in the course of conversation, and he is never guilty of the shocking solecism of interrupting the speech of others.

It displays infinite tact when you do not attempt to correct the pronunciation of others by promptly and correctly using a word that has just been incorrectly spoken. Remember the good sense and delicacy displayed by the Regent George, who drank his tea from the saucer because an aged and old-fashioned gentleman who came to see him followed this antiquated custom.

A cardinal principle in tactful conversation is to avoid arguments, unless you know when and how gracefully to withdraw before friction has excited heat.

Graceful Little Speeches.

Learn to use them. They please everybody, and they have a very important place in daily life and daily talk. "I beg pardon?" for instance, is more graceful than "What say?" when a remark has escaped your ear.

Show stimulating appreciation of the conversational efforts of a companion by using now and then the expressions, "How interesting!" or, "Won't you tell me more of your experiences?" or, "You tell that very well; I can almost see it as it happened."

When you part from a man or woman who has striven to be agreeable, do not fail to express pleasure in his or her talk. Say, if you like, "I am sorry you must go; I have so enjoyed this conversation," or, "I hope I may soon meet you again; this little talk with you has given me great pleasure."

If you are not a fluent conversationalist yourself, these little phrases go far to show how highly you estimate the talents of others, and they thus compensate largely for your shy silence.

Should your conversation suffer interruption or your attention be called away, be sure to say first to your companion, "Excuse me for an instant." Slight as these courtesies seem, they carry the greatest influence with them, and you cannot afford to neglect them.

Be An Inspiring Influence.

A witty French writer has said, "To know how to be silent is more profitable than to know how to speak."

Pray do not make the mistake of thinking that the whole art of charming conversation lies in talking yourself. Some, in fact, a very great deal of it, dwells in knowing how to make others talk. There is no secret in this. The way to inspire the eloquence of others is to observe all the afore-mentioned rules, and then supplement them by never allowing yourself to monopolize the talk.

Do not be egotistical. It is a distressing habit, and discouraging to others.

Never challenge the statements of others nor contradict them, unless it is a question of your own honor or that of a friend that is involved.

If a stranger wishes to talk to you of her baby's measles, or his score at golf, subordinate your own interests to that of your companion, and hear cheerfully all that he or she has to say.

Never answer briefly when a kindly disposed person is trying to talk to you, and do not wear a sad, sorry, stolid, or supercilious expression of countenance. In short, there is a royal road to popularity through conversation, but you must learn its rules and topography first. Afterward you can stride along at a free gait and gather all the sweets that ornament its way; but always remember that your popularity will be measured by your agreeability.

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Where Dignity Holds Sway.

(Philadelphia Ledger.)

Representative Cochran of Missouri had often promised Senator Carmack of Tennessee that he would present him with a special growth of fine Missouri tobacco that could not be beat in the world. The Tennessee senator, who enjoys a good "chaw," waited in vain for this precious gift. So the other day he wrote a note to Cochran, telling him to come over to the senate side of the capitol quickly, as he wanted to see him on important business. Cochran, who is a short, stubby man, came down the corridor puffing like a gasoline runabout. Carmack led him quietly into the senate cloak room and Cochran settled himself into a seat for the anticipated conference.

"Cochran," said Carmack, "give me a chew of that tobacco."

Cochran handed out a plug and the Tennesseean placed a good portion of it comfortably in his mouth. Quietly turning to leave the room, Carmack said:

"That's all, Cochran."

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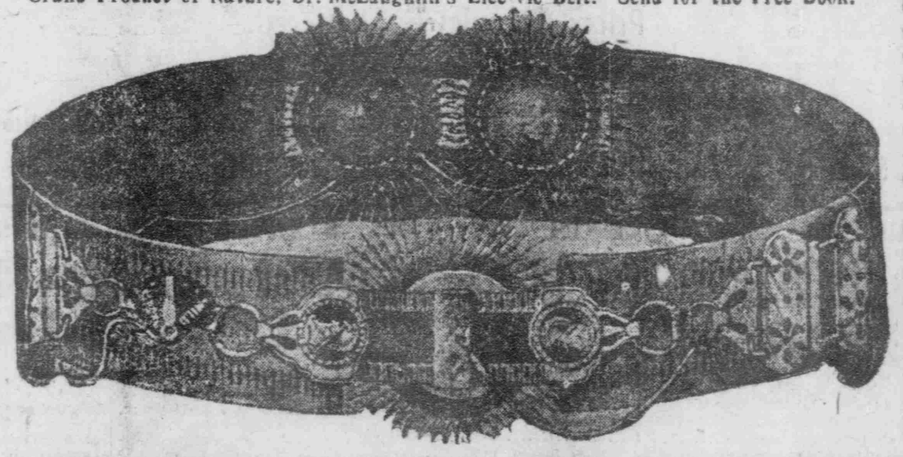

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No man should be weak; no man should suffer the loss of that vital element which renders life worth living. No man should allow himself to become less a man than nature intended him; no man should suffer for the sins of his youth, when there is here at hand a certain cure for his weakness, a check to his waste of power.

Most of the pains, most of the weakness of stomach, heart, brain and nerves from which men suffer are due to an early loss of nature's reserve power through mistakes of youth. You need not suffer for this. You can be restored. The very element which you have lost you can get back, and you may be as happy as any man that lives.

My Electric Belt, with Special Electric Suspensory (free) will restore your power. It will check all unnatural drains and give back the old vigor of youth.

GEORGETOWN, Wash., May 10, '03.

DR. M'LAUGHLIN:

Dear Sir—I feel that I am in duty bound to you and suffering humanity to make a statement in regard to what your Belt has done for me. When I purchased your Belt I was in a bad condition; was compelled to take medicine every day to move the bowels, and my kidneys and liver were so bad that the least jar would give me great pain. My back was so lame that when I sat down it was almost impossible for me to get up again. If I had not purchased your Belt when I did I believe that I would not have lived much longer. After using the Belt for a short time I found the results beyond expectations. All of the above symptoms disappeared. I consider your Belt the best in the market today, and highly commend the attention given each patient while under your care. Yours truly,

JOHN B. WARD.

This drain upon your power causes Kidney Troubles, Rheumatism and Stomach Ailments. You know it's a loss of vital power and affects every organ of the body. Most of the ailments from which men suffer can be traced to it.

I have cured thousands of men who have squandered the savings of years in useless doctoring.

My Belt is easy to use; put it on when you go to bed; you feel the glowing heat from it (no sting or burn, as in old style belts), and you feel the nerves tingle with the new life flowing into them. You get up in the morning feeling like a two-year-old.

CONEJOS, Colo., Sept. 10, 1903.

DR. M'LAUGHLIN:

Dear Sir—Yours of the 31st of August is at hand, and in reply will say that I am very well pleased with the Belt. It has always given a satisfactory current, and is certainly the most effectual method of treatment I have come across. I am greatly obliged to you for your kind attention, for you have handled my case in a very fair and honest manner. I will recommend the treatment every chance I get. Yours truly,

CHAS. E. ERICKSON.

An old man of 70 says he feels as strong and young as he did at 35. That shows how it renews the vigor of youth.

It cures Rheumatism, Sciatic Pains, Lumbago, Kidney Trouble. It banishes pain in a night, never to return.

PIERCE, Ida., Oct. 19, 1903.

DR. M'LAUGHLIN:

Dear Sir—Yours of the 7th inst. is at hand, and in reply will say regarding the Belt I purchased of you that it has done me a great deal of good. I have not been troubled with the slightest trace of rheumatism since I began to wear it, and I can eat almost anything now without bloating or distress. Yours truly,

JOHN ESCALLON.

What ails you? Write and tell me, and, no matter where you are, I think I can give you the address of some one in your town that I have cured. I've cured thousands, and every man of them is a walking advertisement for my Belt.

Every man who ever used it recommends it, because it is honest. It does great work, and those whom I have cured are the more grateful because the cure cost so little.

Every man who uses my Belt gets the advice and counsel of a physician free. I give you all that any medical man can give you, and a lot that he can't.

Try my Belt. Write me today for my beautifully illustrated book, with cuts showing how my Belt is applied, and lots of good reading for men who want to be "The Noblest Work of God," A MAN. Inclose this ad. and I will send this book, sealed, free.

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JUST READ PAGE 8, SECTION 3.

DRUNKENNESS CURED

She would have enjoyed his conversation more, she said, had he taken the Keeley treatment.

A TEST OF TEN YEARS.

Editor Banner of Gold:—It affords me great pleasure to send you my testimony as to the efficacy of the Keeley Cure for inebriety. I consider myself entirely and permanently cured, for it has now been ten years since I took the Keeley Cure, and I have had no desire whatever for alcohol in any form during that time. I am also much improved in health, and am better in every respect.

Before taking the Keeley Cure I was fettered to the habit of alcohol for twenty years, and only those who have been thus fettered can realize what the bondage means, and how powerless the will is to break it. But I can assure anyone who has the desire to break away from the bondage and become a free man that he can surely do so by taking the Keeley Treatment. I have proved it for ten years, and I consider that a pretty good test.

I am so deeply grateful for my cure that I wish to be of service to humanity in directing those who are bound to alcoholism to a remedy, and if these few lines should induce any to try the treatment, I shall consider the writing of them to be the best work of my life. Respectfully yours,

Wallingford, Conn., May 21, 1901. WILLIAM J. HODGETTS.

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